

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 DAKAR 08461 221653Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 PA-01 CU-04 PRS-01

USIA-06 SCS-06 CA-01 COME-00 /052 W

-----126784 221856Z /53

R 221600Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2140

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY BISSAU POUCH

AMEMBASSY BANJUL POUCH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DAKAR 8461

STATE FOR CA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, SG

SUBJECT: AMERICAN TOURISTS IN SENEGAL

1. THE FIRST FULL-SCALE CHARTER PROGRAM BRINGING LARGE NUMBERS OF AMERICAN TOURISTS TO WEST AFRICA HAS JUST CONCLUDED. EMBASSY DAKAR FEELS THAT A FEW MOMMENTS ON THE PROGRAM'S IMPACT ARE IN ORDER.

2. THE PROGRAM CONSISTSED OF WEEKLY CHARTER FLIGHTS FROM VARIOUS EAST COAST CITIES TO DAKAR. PARTICIPANTS RECEIVED ROUND-TRIP FLIGHT AND ONE WEEK'S LODGINING IN A HOTEL, ALL FOR \$345. A VARIETY OF SIDE TRIPS AT ADDITIONAL COST WERE OFFERED BY THE GROUND AGENT OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 DAKAR 08461 221653Z

THE AMERICAN CHARTER COMPANY, INTERNATIONAL WEEKENDS. UPON ARRIVAL THE PARTICIPANTS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER FOR AN ORIEN- TATION BRIEFING IN WHICH A MEMBER OF THE EMBASSY STAFF OFTEN PARTICIPATED. THE GROUPS WERE LARGELY COMPOSED OF BLACK AMERICANS, MANY OF WHOM WERE MAKING THEIR FIRST TRIP ABROAD. THE SENEGALESE MINISTRY OF TOURISM TOOK AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE PROGRAM AND PROVIDED AN AIRPORT WELCOME

COMPLETE WITH TRADITIONAL AFRICAN MUSIC AND DANCERS FOR EACH GROUP.

3. PARTICIPANTS ON THE PROGRAM COULD GENERALLY BE PLACED IN TWO CATEGORIES; THOSE SEEKING AN INEXPENSIVE, FUN-IN-THE-SUN, BEACH VACATION AND THOSE SEEKING A MEANINGFUL, CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE. MANY AMERICANS IN BOTH CATEGORIES APPARENTLY FOUND WHAT THEY WERE LOOKING FOR AND LIKED IT. OTHERS EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE PROGRAM OR RAN INTO DIFFICULTIES DURING THEIR STAY. EMBASSY DAKAR BELIEVES THAT MOST DIFFICULTIES STEMMED FROM MISCONCEPTIONS THAT AMERICANS BROUGHT WITH THEM FROM THE U.S.. BECAUSE OF THE INCREDIBLY LOW PRICE OF THE CHARTER PACKAGE, MANY PARTICIPANTS BELIEVED THAT THEY WOULD NOT NEED A LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY TO COVER MEALS, SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT HERE. OF COURSE, THIS WAS ABSOLUTELY UNTRUE, DAKAR IS A VERY EXPENSIVE CITY, ESPECIALLY FOR TOURISTS. MANY AMERICANS, AFTER READING THE BROCHURES PUBLISHED BY THE CHARTER COMPANY, EXPECTED SENEGAL TO BE ANOTHER HAWAII, I.E. A TROPICAL PARADISE WITH ALL THE COMFORTS OF HOME. THEY WERE CONSEQUENTLY UNPREPARED FOR THE LOW LEVEL OF EFFICIENCY AND THE CONSTANT DELAYS WHICH ARE A WAY OF LIFE HERE (MOST OF THEM UNDERSTAND WELL THE MEANING OF WAWA BY THE TIME THEY LEAVE). THE OTHER CATEGORY, THOSE LOOKING FOR A "ROOTS" TYPE ENCOUNTER WERE OFTEN STYMIED BY THE LANGUAGE BARRIER AND THE BRIEF AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT HERE. THE BUSH TOURS ORGANIZED BY THE COMPANY PROVIDED A DISAPPOINTING GLIMPSE OF A CHOREOGRAPHED "VILLAGE FESTIVAL".

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 DAKAR 08461 221653Z

4. THERE WAS NOT AN EXCESSIVE NUMBER OF PROBLEMS AMONG THE TOURISTS WHICH REQUIRED CONSULAR ASSISTANCE, YET THOSE THAT DID OCCUR IN UNEXPECTED AREAS. DESPITE THE HIGH LEVEL OF EXPERTISE AMONG SENEGALESE PICKPOCKETS, THERE WERE ONLY THREE REPORTS OF LOST/STOLEN PASSPORTS OUT OF A TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 4000 TOURISTS. CONOFF FEARED THAT THE HEAT AND HUMIDITY MIGHT CREATE SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR THE NUMEROUS ELDERLY AMERICANS BUT THIS, FORTUNATELY, DID NOT OCCUR. THERE WERE SEVERAL MINOR INCIDENTS INVOLVING DISAGREEMENTS OVER PRICE BETWEEN TOURISTS AND TAXI DRIVERS OR STREET VENDORS BUT THEY WERE ALL RESOLVED SATISFACTORILY WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF THE POLICE. THE MOST DISTRESSING INCIDENTS TO OCCUR INVOLVED TWO AMERICANS IN TWO SEPARATE GROUPS, BOTH OF WHOM DEVELOPED SEVERE MENTAL DEPRESSION AND PARANOIA SOON AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL AND HAD TO BE REPATRIATED TO THE U.S. TO AVOID THE POSSIBILITY OF COMPLETE BREAKDOWN. IN BOTH CASES CULTURE SHOCK WAS QUITE PROBABLY THE TRIGGERING FACTOR.

5. FROM A FINANCIAL STANDPOINT THE PROGRAM CAN BE CALLED AN OVERWHELMING SUCCESS, BOTH FOR INTERNATIONAL WEEKENDS AND FOR SENEGAL. ACCORDING TO A REPRESENTATIVE OF INTERNATIONAL WEEK-

ENDS, THE FLIGHTS ARE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN AGAIN NEXT SPRING OR
EARLY SUMMER. ALMOST EVERY FLIGHT DURING THIS PAST SEASON WAS
FULLY BOOKED. THE CONTINUING POPULARITY OF "ROOTS" PRACTICALLY
ASSURES SIMILAR SUCCESS NEXT SEASON.
DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT.
COHEN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOURISM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 22-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DAKAR08461
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770478-0374
Format: TEL
From: DAKAR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771227/aaaaawsl.tel
Line Count: 122
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3b1b49fe-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 148876
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMERICAN TOURISTS IN SENEGAL
TAGS: CASC, SG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3b1b49fe-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009